



ESEA Information Update

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction/Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent, P.O. Box 7841/Madison, WI 53707-7841

Bulletin No. 02.05

May 20, 2002

Revised: July 30, 2004

Topic: Safe and Drug-Free Schools: Essential for Student Success

Safe and drug-free school environments are essential elements for student success. So critical are they that one of the **five** ESEA performance goals that states are required to adopt is:

All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free and conducive to learning.

The reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also known as the “No Child Left Behind” act, includes the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program as Title IV–Part A. The purpose of Part A is to support programs that prevent violence in and around schools, prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs, and are coordinated with other efforts in order to support student academic achievement. The last line of this purpose statement is critical. Numerous studies have shown that students who do not feel safe and students who are not free of the effects of drugs and alcohol cannot achieve their full academic potential. The Department of Public Instruction agrees that safe and drug-free environments are essential for optimal learning, and these funds are essential for supporting effective efforts to reduce barriers to student achievement and success. School districts are encouraged to use these funds to continue this important support for drug and violence prevention programs.

A major change in the program is in the distribution formula, with 40 percent of funds awarded based on enrollment and 60 percent on student poverty based on the amount received under Title I–Part A for the proceeding year. In the past, some funds were targeted to a relatively small number of districts statewide determined to be in “highest need” of additional resources, but this provision was eliminated.

In order to receive funds under Title IV Part A, local districts must submit an ESEA consolidated application. The law requires that the Safe and Drug-Free Schools portion of the application include:

- a description of the activities or programs to be funded and how they comply with the “Principles of Effectiveness,” including the use of strategies with scientific research demonstrating effectiveness;
- the districts’ “performance measures,” which clearly describe targets for risk reduction and/or increased protective factors (such as developmental assets);
- a statement of how the programs and activities are targeted to meet identified needs;
- a description of how the district will involve parents in the development and implementation of the program;
- a description of how the program activities will be coordinated with other programs for drug and violence prevention; and

- a description of how program progress will be assessed and publicly reported.
- Additionally, each district will be asked to make specific assurances that:
- it has a comprehensive safe schools plan, including policies, security procedures, prevention activities, crisis response procedures, and a Code of Conduct for students;
 - it will use funds to supplement current or past efforts and not use these funds to supplant those from other sources;
 - it will implement programs that utilize a “wrong and harmful” message about illegal drug use and violence; and
 - the application is available for review by the public.

Finally, the new law requires districts to comply with data collection requirements necessary for the state to complete its reporting requirements. Among the data to be required are:

- truancy rates;
- drug and violence related suspensions and expulsions;
- description of curricula and other program strategies funded through these grants;
- incidence, prevalence, age of onset, perceptions of health risks, and perceptions of social disapproval of alcohol and drug use and violence by youths; and
- criminal incidents on school property.

These data must be publicly reported. In order to comply, the Department of Public Instruction uses data currently collected through the School Performance Report (SPR) and reports it on its website as part of the Wisconsin Information Network for Student Success (WINSS). **Incidence and prevalence data is collected through the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and** End-of-year Safe and Drug-Free Schools reports will be used to collect from all districts the additional information not gathered as part of the **YRBS and SPR processes**.

Districts may choose from a number of program activities that meet local needs, are science-based effective strategies, are coordinated with efforts of other local programs, and have parental support. In addition to previously allowable activities, *new* allowable activities include:

- expanding/improving school-based mental health services;
- alternative education for violent/drug abusing students;
- programs testing students for drug use, including locker searches;
- school record transfers related to suspensions or expulsions;
- school violence hotlines;
- employee background checks; and
- responding to the needs of youth with domestic violence or child abuse problems.

Guidance and applications will be available in mid-May and are due June 30 as part of the ESEA consolidated application. Applications will be reviewed and approved, or returned with requests for revisions or clarification, within 120 days of submission.

For more information visit www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/sspw/safedrgfr.html or contact the Department of Public Instruction’s Student Services/Prevention and Wellness Team with questions at 608-266-8960.

Specific questions related to this bulletin should be directed to:

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